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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S COURTESY CALL ON NEW DEFENSE MINISTER

REF: A. BUCHAREST 01450
[1](#)B. BUCHAREST 01600
[1](#)C. BUCHAREST 01644

Classified By: Political Counselor Ted Tanoue for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador paid a courtesy call on November 7 to new Defense Minister Sorin Frunzaverde, who replaced Teodor AntanasIU. Note: AntanasIU's relationship to a domestic spying scandal led to his suspension on September 12, and was followed by his resignation on October 25 (reftels). end note. Frunzaverde said that, from his previous position as the Director for International Affairs for the Democratic Party (PD), Frunzaverde was well aware of who are Romania's friends and what they have done. Romania would not be in NATO or in the EU without U.S. support. He assured the Ambassador that under his tenure, Romania would fulfill its multilateral obligations, especially in the Global War on Terrorism. Also that Romania would fulfill its commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan; a position that has President Basescu's full support. He noted that he had seen U.S.-Romania military cooperation first hand in Kandahar and was convinced that Romania must stand by the U.S. against the terrorists. "You will have an ally," he emphasized. He added that the comments made by the previous defense minister about a possible withdrawal from Iraq by Romania were regrettable and a "stupid mistake."

[1](#)2. (C) In terms of his policy priorities, Frunzaverde indicated that he had several major projects, including procurement programs that would have affect the three services (army, navy and air force) that he planned to raise with the Finance Minister next week. He hoped to share more information on these projects in the days ahead. He underscored that the U.S. would be an important partner in these programs. Frunzaverde made a particular appeal for an F-16 program for Romania, and looked forward to working closely with the U.S. on this system. He added that Romania would also want to take part in the JSF program.

[1](#)3. (C) Regarding the interplay of political forces, Frunzaverde noted that Romania and the U.S. have a solid partnership and he will keep it as it is. He considered (without elaboration) that perhaps Romania may need to take more steps in strengthening the partnership. Frunzaverde noted that "America, not Germany and not France," was vital to Romania's future. Finally Frunzaverde expressed strong interest in a trip to Washington at the earliest possibility. Frunzaverde's aide Brigadier General Viorel Angelescu said, if possible, a formal invitation from Washington for an official visit would be much appreciated.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Frunzaverde is a substantial and energetic improvement over his predecessor. When asked whether he would be empowered to negotiate and sign the Implementing

Arrangements on U.S. Forces in Romania for example, Frunzaverde said he would check on this. Not only has Frunzaverde hit the ground running, and has made clear his intention to keep the U.S.-Romanian defense partnership strong, but he also wants to strengthen the partnership. He appears to recognize the limitations in some of what he would like for Romania, such as the need to build Romania's capacity to manage complex system like the F-16, before acquisition. He will continue to press to bring Romania's military into the 21st century as quickly as possible. We will need to continue to manage some of the more ambitious components of the U.S.-Romanian partnership through substantial and meaningful training opportunities and broadening the range of programs for building Romania's defense capacity. End Comment.
Taubman